

# Great Hikes in Tennessee State Parks:

## Radnor Lake State Natural Area Offers an Easy Hike for People Wild About Wildflowers

By Fran Wallas

Many people love to see Radnor Lake State Natural Area's spring wildflower show in Nashville. If you don't mind sharing the hike with others, you can begin your hike at any time. If you want to have some quiet time in the woods, you may want to come early in the morning or on a beautiful rainy day.

Begin your hike at the visitor center to get a trail map and learn about the history of the natural area. Park rangers can tell you which flowers are blooming and where to find them. The side door of the visitor center leads to the Spillway Trail. You will forget that you are in the middle of a city and feel like you are in a wilderness. In a quarter of a mile, you will see the spillway and lake built in 1914. The spillway is a good place to watch the geese, find turtles, or glimpse the shadows of few big fish. Follow the fairly level Lake Trail and you will begin to see more flowers and maybe a few deer. You may want to stop at one of the benches to listen to the birds. More than 200 different birds have been identified in the area. You can frequently hear the call of a Barred Owl and can see them even in the daytime. This is a good hike to be enjoyed slowly.

You will come to a junction with the Ganier Ridge Trail. Since most of the flowers are at the lake level, you may want to save that loop for the winter view. The larkspur are magnificent



Larkspur decorates the trail for spring at Radnor Lake State Natural Area in Nashville.

in the area beginning just after the junction. If you are too early or too late for the larkspur, you may see Spring Beauty, Rue Anemone, Hepatica, Toothwort, Wild Geranium, or Trout Lily. The lake trail ends at Otter Creek Road in about one and a half miles.

Turn right at the road and hike back toward the visitor center. Although you won't see many flowers on this part of the hike, you will pass several wetland areas. This is your chance to see many turtles including sliders, Snapping Turtles, soft-shelled turtles and Mud Turtles. If you are really lucky, you will see the otters and

muskrat that live in the area.

As you walk down the road, you will pass a trailhead on your left for the South Lake Trail. This trail is more of a climb, but has trillium, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Celandine Poppies as well as more larkspur. You may want to take this detour that is only a mile. The South Lake Trail climbs the hill and loops back down to the road. In any case, the road leads you back to the visitor center parking lot and you are back in the middle of a big city.

These geese were seen on a log at Radnor Lake State Natural Area in Nashville.



### Directions

Take I 65 to Harding Place, Exit 78. Travel west on Harding Place (or Battery Lane) to Granny White Pike. Turn left and travel south to Otter Creek Road and turn left (across from Granny White Market). The road ends at the parking lot.

#### Radnor Lake State Natural Area



(Fran Wallas is an avid hiker. She works as an attorney for the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation in Nashville.)